



State of Louisiana

Department of Environmental Quality



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Baton Rouge area now receives marginal designation by EPA

BATON ROUGE – The Environmental Protection Agency’s revocation of the one-hour standard for ozone is effective today and the eight-hour standard will be used as the new standard. Under the more stringent eight-hour standard, the Baton Rouge area will no longer be classified as severe for ozone. Instead, the five-parish area will be marginal.

The one-hour standard was set at 125 parts per billion of ozone during any one-hour block. Under that standard, East Baton Rouge, West Baton Rouge, Iberville, Ascension and Livingston parishes were classified as severe.

Under the eight-hour standard, the ozone level is set at 85 ppb over an eight-hour average. EPA uses the average of the annual fourth highest eight-hour daily maximum concentrations from each of the last three years of air quality monitoring data to determine a violation of the eight-hour ozone standard.

“This is a good day for Baton Rouge because we shed the undeserved designation of severe for ozone,” DEQ Secretary Mike McDaniel said. “There remains a lot of work ahead of us and we are committed to reaching attainment in 2007. It will be a community effort to reach that goal. We have 22 additional monitors collecting data this year, an ozone action plan and other controls in place to help us.”

According to McDaniel, the reclassification from severe to marginal will also help with the state’s economic development efforts. “The severe classification was something that businesses notice when they are looking to locate in the Baton Rouge area. Getting reclassified as marginal puts us in a better posture when competing for new business.”

Because of the transition, there are emergency rules effective today. McDaniel explained that because of the change in ozone status there could be changes in some regulations.

“The federal law allows for some relaxing of some control issues,” McDaniel said. “The emergency rules are not going to allow anyone to relax that much.”

To see the emergency rule and to get more information on the transition from 1-hour to 8-hour standard, go to the DEQ website at www.deq.louisiana.gov.